

We recognize that all nations have an interest and responsibility in protecting those rights and freedoms.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum and its attached annex were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 14.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Military Leaders *June 14, 2007*

It's been my honor to receive General Dempsey and his wife here to the Oval Office to thank both of them for their service to the country. General Dempsey has just come out of Iraq, where he is working with the Iraqi troops to prepare for—to prepare them for the day when they will be responsible for the security of their country. He explained to me the progress that has been made over the years that he has been there. Obviously, we have still more work to do.

But I—my main purpose of inviting the general here is to hear his summary, but to thank him. It's an extraordinary country where people volunteer to go into combat zones to protect the security of the United States of America. No more important mis-

sion for our military than Iraq and Afghanistan.

And General Dempsey and his family have been very much involved in this war on terror. And we appreciate you and thank you and wish you all the best in your next assignment.

Thanks for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Vice President Dick Cheney; Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Lt. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, former commander, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq, and his wife Deanie.

Remarks to the Associated Builders and Contractors *June 14, 2007*

Thank you all. Thank you. Thanks for coming. I'm proud to be with you, glad to be back with the Associated Builders and Contractors. I appreciate your organization. I didn't realize you were founded in 1950, about the same time a piano nearly fell through the roof at the White House—[laughter]—thereby causing Harry Truman to decide to renovate it. And for that, Laura and I are very grateful. [Laughter]

I am grateful for your organization as well. I thank you for being builders, doers,

and dreamers. I thank you for being people who are willing to take a risk to help build our Nation and, at the same time, employ people. I want to talk to you today about how to keep the entrepreneurial spirit strong, how to keep this economy growing, and our need to protect the American people from harm. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and do so.

David Meyer, thank you, and I thank your board for inviting me. Joining us today is one of my finest Secretaries, Secretary

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of the Department of Commerce. I appreciate you coming, Carlos, and thank you for being here. Carlos was born in Cuba. His folks decided that it would be best that he and they come to a free society. He rose to become the CEO of a major U.S. corporation, and now he sits in the Cabinet of the United States of America. That's what the American Dream is all about, and it's in this Nation's interest to preserve dreams.

I want to thank Congressman Todd Platts from Pennsylvania for joining us. Todd—there you are. How you doing, Todd? Thanks for being here, honored you're here. His mother is a manufacturer. She manufactures peanut fudge, and Platts always brings me some of it. *[Laughter]* I can't ride enough mountain bikes to—*[laughter]*. Give her my best.

Thanks for letting me come by. I love entrepreneurs, and I like to be with them. Entrepreneurs are folks that really work hard. Nothing more exciting than having your own business. I'm sure some of you probably wondered growing up whether it'd be possible, whether you'd be able to have the ingenuity and the capacity to say, "This is my business." But you've obviously overcome the difficult hurdles that face small-business owners and business owners, and you're succeeding. And I'm grateful. The role of government is to make your jobs easier, not harder. It makes sense to encourage entrepreneurship.

And that begins with tax policy. I believe if you have more money in your pocket, you're more likely to buy a piece of equipment or hire a new worker. I think the best way to overcome economic difficulties that we've had in the past is to cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. That requires fundamental trust, for those of us in government, in your capacity to spend your money better than the government can spend it. But that's what I believe.

And I also believe that with more money in circulation in private hands, it encourages small-business growth and activity and

commerce. And that's why we cut taxes not only on people with children and people who are married, but we cut taxes on small businesses. As a matter of fact, I thought it was fair to cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes, not to say, "Okay, well, this group pays, and you get a tax cut, but this group pays, and you don't get a tax cut." That's not good tax policy, as far as I'm concerned.

We put the—cut taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We put the death tax on the road to extinction. I say, "on the road to extinction," it's not totally extinct. And I would hope that you would prioritize getting rid of the death tax as part of your legislative agendas for not only this year but next year and the years to come, to make sure that we get rid of the death tax once and for all. It would be good for our farmers and small-business owners. I don't think you ought to be taxed twice: once when you're living and once when you die. *[Laughter]*

There is a lot of political debate in Washington about tax cuts, if you can imagine. Some would rather have your money to increase the size of government. Others, like me, say: "Well, we got plenty of money. You ought to have more money." I just want to point out the facts. Since we enacted major tax relief in 2003, in the face of recession and corporate scandals and attacks, our economy has added more than 8 million new jobs in 45 months of uninterrupted job growth. Unemployment is low. Inflation is down. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are growing. This economy is good, and the way to keep it good and to keep it strong is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

You'll hear people say, "No, we can't do that because we must balance the budget." Now really, I've been around here long enough to know how it works in Washington, and that is—they'll say, "Well, we're going to raise your taxes. Don't worry, we're just only going to tax the rich." Well,

first of all, it doesn't work that way. You can't raise enough money on the so-called rich in order to whet the appetite of some of the spenders here. [Laughter]

And secondly, the money is not going to go to balance the budget. The money inevitably goes to new programs, expanded government. The best way to balance the budget, in my judgment, is to keep taxes low, so the economy grows, and be wise about how we spend your money. And our strategy is working. This just isn't theory; it's actually working. This year, the Treasury Department reported that Federal revenues through May are up 8 percent over the same period last year. In other words, a revenue stream is growing because of economic activity. And because we worked with the Congress last year to hold down spending, the budget deficit this year is about a third lower than it was at this time last year.

And if we continue to be wise about how we spend the money and keep the economic vitality alive, we can balance the budget by 2012. Now this is going to take discipline here in Washington, DC. Sometimes this city may be short of fiscal discipline, but that's why they give the President the veto. And I'm looking forward to working with the Congress to make sure that we're wise about how we spend your money.

A couple of other issues I want to talk briefly about. Look, I understand the health care issues you face. Health care needs to be affordable and available, no question. But we've got to make sure we do it without asking the Federal Government to run the health care program. We want decisions made by providers and patients.

I heard the word Dave said about regulation and redtape. I understand your concerns. I also understand your concerns about these junk lawsuits. The country needs to make sure we put an end to junk lawsuits that threaten job providers and job creators such as yourself.

You know, I just returned this week from Poland, Gdansk, Poland. We had a great trip, by the way. And it was really fantastic to represent the United States of America overseas. We're such a beacon of hope and a beacon of liberty. And anyway, we just came—and that's a city, by the way, where trade union activists once risked and gave their lives for the right to elect their government freely under a secret ballot. [Laughter]

And for the last 60 years in our country, secret ballots have allowed workers to vote their conscience on whether to form a union or remain unaffiliated. The House has passed, as you well know, and the Senate is considering what they call "card check legislation." It simply means that workers would be denied the right to have a secret ballot. The legislation would expose workers to intimidation. It violates the principle of our democracy. And if it ever makes it to my desk, I'm going to veto it.

Supporting free enterprise also means building an immigration system that upholds our laws and keeps this economy strong. You have made comprehensive immigration reform one of your top legislative priorities, and I thank you for your commitment on this vital issue. And it is a vital issue. We have worked—Carlos Gutierrez and Michael Chertoff, two members of my Cabinet, have worked very closely with others in my administration, with Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate to produce a bipartisan immigration bill. And it took a lot of work. It took many months of intense negotiations. And it represents the best hope for lasting reform.

I was disappointed last week when the bill was temporarily withdrawn by the Senate majority leader. Leaders of both parties since then have expressed their commitment to resolving the issues that led to the setback and bring the bill back to the floor. And I appreciate that commitment, and I urge them to do so as quickly as possible so Congress can pass and I can

sign, this year, comprehensive immigration reform.

The need for reform is urgent. Our immigration system has been broken for many years. Most Americans agree that the 1986 immigration law failed; it didn't work. It failed because it did not secure our border. It failed because it did not create a reliable system for employers to verify the legal status of their workers. And it encouraged more people to come to America illegally. It didn't work, and it needs to be fixed. When you find something that doesn't work, you have a responsibility to fix it.

The number of illegal immigrants in our country has continued to grow, and illegal immigration is now supported by criminal enterprises. In other words, there are people who are preying on these folks that are coming to do work that Americans aren't doing. You've got a whole system of *coyotes*; those are smugglers, human smugglers, taking advantage of a broken system. You've got document forgers, people wanting to work and they know they've got to have some papers, and there are people, a whole industry of people, providing them with false documents. People are being exploited as a result of a broken system, and this isn't right. We can do better.

I understand Americans are skeptical about immigration reform. There's a lot of people saying: "Well, there's just no possible way that they can achieve important objectives; after all, they tried in '86, and it failed." People are—got a lot of emotions on this issue. You probably hear it at the coffee shops, talking about the issue. People are very emotional about immigration reform, and people have got different perspectives on a course of action. Most say—many say the most important issue is to secure the border. Others say an important part of immigration reform is to find the workers they need to help a growing economy. Still others say that it's important to resolve the status of 12 million people already here illegally and help immigrants as-

similate into our society. There's varieties of opinions about this subject.

I believe that we must address all these concerns in order to have an effective system, and that's why I strongly support comprehensive immigration reform. And I appreciate you understanding that in order to have a system that works, all the issues must be addressed.

By moving forward with the bill in the Senate, we will make our border more secure. In other words, if you're worried about border security, you ought to be supporting this bill. For decades, we have not been in complete control of the border. I was honored to be the Governor of Texas. I know something about a large border with Mexico—[laughter]—and we weren't in control of that border. A lot of people then say, "Well, if you hadn't been in control, do you have the capacity to secure the border?" You'll hear a lot of people here say, "Well, since you didn't do it in the past, you can't do it in the future." In other words, people are worried about that issue.

The first step to comprehensive reform must be to enforce immigration laws at the border and at worksites across the country. The administration—our administration has taken significant steps, by the way, to increase border security and worksite enforcement. Since I've took office, we've more than doubled funding for border security. I mean, there's a focused effort, by the way, to do what many Americans want us to do, which is to secure that border. We've expanded the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to about 13,000. We've set our Nation on the course to double the size of Border Patrol during my Presidency. In other words, we're going to add another 5,000 agents.

I was in Artesia, New Mexico, to a border training center. I watched these good folks prepare for this very important job. We've increased the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents—I'm sure you understand what an ICE agent is—from about 8,000 in 2002 to more

than 11,000. In other words, on the enforcement side, we've made some serious efforts to do what the American people expect us to do.

There used to be a problem with catch-and-release. Our Border Patrol agents would find somebody trying to sneak into our country illegally. They would say: "We caught you; now report back to the local immigration court so you can have your hearing," because there was no place to hold these good people—or these people. And guess what would happen? They'd head off into society and say, "See you later," and never return for the court date. So we worked with Congress and expanded the number of beds on our border, and we've effectively ended catch-and-release.

I want to tell you a statistic that may surprise you. Last year, we apprehended and sent home more than about 1.1 million people entering our country illegally. Now think about that. In 1 year alone, our Border Patrol agents and law enforcement agents found 1.1 million people coming into our country illegally and sent them home. They're working hard down there, and they're making progress. People are doing the jobs we expect them to do, and now we're going to build on this progress.

So this bill sets clear benchmarks for border security that must be met before other elements of this legislation are triggered. We make a priority of securing the border. These benchmarks include further increasing Border Patrol agents, building miles of fencing, and modernizing the border. You can't fence the whole border, but you can use fencing in a way to help known—to help stop people at known crossing points. It's a smart part of making sure the border is secure, along with other ways to modernize the border—berms and electronics and UAVs. We're going to improve our surveillance capability; in other words, we're modernizing the border. It hasn't been that way. And we're making progress to modernize that border.

It also includes benchmarks for giving honest employers the tools to verify that they're hiring legal workers. Most people want to comply with the law. I know you do. Yet it's awfully hard for you to be a document verifier. That's not what you—[*applause*]. It's a burden to place on small-business owners, to be—say, "Okay, you've got to make sure that the documents that look real are real." These document forgers are good. They know what they're doing. They're preying on innocent people who want to simply find work to put food on the table back at home.

And so the bill we're talking about says, okay, enough is enough when it comes to document forgery. We'll create a tamper-resistant identity card for foreign workers and a mandatory electronic system for verifying employment eligibility. This will make sure that you're complying with the law, that you don't have to guess, that you don't hope you're dealing with some forged document. It will make it easier for you to do your—run your businesses, and at the same time, it will make it easier for the government to punish those who hire illegal immigrants—knowingly hire illegal immigrants. In other words, it gives us a chance to enforce the law, and that's what the American people want.

It's important for the people to know that their government is serious about meeting these benchmarks. One common concern is whether the government will provide the resources to meet the goals in the bill. People say: "It's fine to talk about it. Are you actually going to do something?" To answer these concerns, I support an amendment that will provide \$4.4 billion in immediate additional funding for securing our borders and enforcing our laws at the worksite. This funding will come from the fines and penalties that we collect from those who have come to our country illegally.

By matching our benchmarks with these critical funds, we're going to show the American people that the promises in this

bill will be kept. And so I call on the Senators to pass this amendment and to show the American people that we're going to do our jobs of securing this border once and for all.

But by moving forward with this bill, we'll also help meet the needs of a growing economy. When the economy grows, people are looking for workers. That's Economics 1. [*Laughter*] You're probably some who are looking for workers. As you get expanded work orders, you're wondering whether you can find the workers to meet the needs. That's what happens when the economy grows—you need workers to make the economy grow.

The reality is, in America, that the construction industry and other sectors depend on foreign workers to fill jobs Americans are not doing. That's the reality of the world we live in. So once our border security and worksite enforcement measure is in place, this bill will create a new temporary-worker program. The program will establish a lawful and orderly process for foreign workers to come to America on a temporary basis. This will help reduce the number of people trying to sneak across our border. If you're truly interested in border security, it makes sense to give people a legal way to come to do work Americans aren't doing, on a temporary basis.

See, people are sneaking in because they want to work. It makes sense to me to say: "Instead of sneaking in, here's a temporary-worker card that's tamper-proof, that you can go fill jobs that Americans aren't doing. Therefore, you don't sneak across." Such a system will take pressure off the border and let our Border Patrol agents focus on drug runners or gun runners or terrorists. I strongly believe that it's in our economic interest and in our security interest to have a temporary-worker program.

This legislation will also create a merit-based point system for admitting new immigrants to our country. The system will reward new applicants based upon skills and education so we can ensure that Amer-

ica continues to have the world's most talented workforce. It's a reform of an immigration system that hasn't worked. The bill is a practical way to address problems that have sprung up as a result of an immigration system that hasn't worked. By moving forward, this bill will resolve the status of those who are here illegally—already here illegally.

Look, we need to do this without animosity and without amnesty. I know there are some people who, I guess, believe that we could just kick them out of the country. That's just totally impractical; it won't work. We need a practical solution to a problem that has arisen as a result of a bill that didn't work, the 1986 immigration bill.

Amnesty is forgiveness with no penalty for people who have broken our laws to get here. In contrast, this bill requires illegal workers to pay a fine, to register with the government, to undergo background checks, to pay their back taxes, to hold down a steady job, and to learn English in a set period of time.

At the end of 8 years, if they want to apply for a green card—in other words, get in line for citizenship—after 8 years, they'll have to return to their home country so they can apply from there, pay an additional fine. In short, they will prove themselves worthy of a great land.

The legislation will also help newcomers to our country assimilate into our society. One of the great beauties of America has been, people can come to this country with a dream and become Americans; that's assimilate.

Carlos Gutierrez's story is a great story. Mel Martinez's parents put him on an airplane from Cuba to Florida because a tyrant emerged on that island. He was in my Cabinet. I was at the Coast Guard Academy the other day; the number-one graduate at the Coast Guard Academy talked about his migrant worker grandfather who came to America with a dream. And now the grandson stands in front of the President talking about the beauties of

America. You know, Americans must be confident in our ability to assimilate newcomers. We have done so in the past, and we will do so in the future. It's a—people newly arrived with dreams lift our soul; they invigorate our society; they work hard to become Americans. And it's important for us to help them assimilate.

And the key to that, the key to unlocking the full promise of America, is the ability to read, write, and speak English. And so the bill affirms that English is the language of our land. And the bill will expand opportunities to help new immigrants learn our language and the shared ideals that make us all Americans.

We have an historic window of opportunity to act now. Now is the time to get it done. We've got to summon the political courage to move forward on comprehensive reform. Doing nothing is not a solution. If we fail to act, the problems of 1986 will continue. The pressures on our border will not be alleviated. Employers will be left without a reliable system for verifying the legal status of their workers. Jobs will go unfulfilled. Hard-working immigrants will remain in the shadows of our society. And our Nation will continue to have a broken immigration system.

The American people expect people in Washington, DC, to solve problems. I believe we can express our feelings, disagree on certain elements of the legislation, and still come together on a solution. I'm confident that we can pass a bill into law this year, and it will show the American people that we can prove we're serious about confronting the great issues of our time.

Now is the time to set aside all the political wrangling that tends to dominate the scene here in Washington, DC, and do hard work and pass a comprehensive immigration bill. And I'm counting on your help to get it done. *[Applause]* Thank you all.

As we work on this legislation at home, we're meeting important responsibilities abroad. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw that problems originating in a failed

and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our cities. Nine/Eleven was a turning point for our Nation. We learned that our Nation's security depends on fighting our enemies overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. And we learned that to secure our country, we must advance the cause of freedom as the great alternative to tyranny and terror.

We're in an ideological conflict with ambitious men who have a different view of government than we do. They don't believe in dissent. They don't believe in freedom to worship as one sees fit. They want to extend their power and reach throughout the Middle East. They want to reestablish a caliphate. And they murder to achieve their objectives. You can't talk reason to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. We must stay on the offense and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

We went into Afghanistan and helped remove an oppressive government that harbored the terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks. Today, because we acted, the terrorist camps in Afghanistan have been shut down. Al Qaida lost its safe haven. Twenty-five million people have been liberated. The Afghan people have elected a government that is fighting terrorists instead of harboring them. It's in our Nation's security interests; it's in our national interest to stand with that young democracy in Afghanistan and give their people a chance to live in liberty.

In Iraq, we removed a cruel dictator who was an enemy of the United States of America, had used—who had used weapons of mass destruction, who was paying the families of suicide bombers, who had invaded his neighbors, who was given a chance to disclose or disarm by the U.N. Security Council not once, but numerous times. He made the wrong choice. I made the choice to uphold what the free world

said. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power, and so are the Iraqis.

And now we're undertaking the difficult and dangerous work of helping Iraq establish a functioning democracy that can protect our people and be an ally in this struggle against radicals and extremists who use murder to achieve an ideological objective. And the stakes are high, and it's tough work.

In December 2005, if you can remember that far back—[laughter]—nearly 12 million Iraqis went to the polls. I was pleased but not surprised. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe people want to be free. And here, after years of tyranny, when given a chance, 12 million people went to the polls. And by going to the polls, they chose a new government under the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world.

A thinking enemy watched all this. And in 2006, Al Qaida—the folks who orchestrated the attack on the United States of America on September the 11th, 2001—and other Sunni extremists ramped up their attacks, which led to a tragic escalation of sectarian violence. In the face of the violence, I had a choice to make: to withdraw our troops, or to send reinforcements to help the Iraqis quell the violence.

Had I been polled during that period of time, I'd have said I was—I didn't approve of what was happening in Iraq. I'd have been one of the "you-can-put-me-down-as-not-approving." The sectarian violence was getting more severe, and I had a choice. It's what Presidents do; they make decisions. And that's what you do; you make decisions. I made a decision. I decided to send more troops with a new mission to help the Iraqi Government secure the population and get control of Baghdad. I put our troops under a new commander, General David Petraeus, who wrote the Army's new manual on counterinsurgency warfare.

It is too early to judge the results of this new strategy. General Petraeus, recently put it this way: "We haven't even started the full surge yet." He just got his troops on the ground. Only at the end of this week will the last of the five reinforcement brigades become fully operational.

Under our new strategy, American and Iraqi forces are now living side by side in Baghdad neighborhoods. As Iraqis see forces patrolling their streets, they're gaining the trust, and they're getting new cooperation from the residents.

Now, just as an example of what I'm talking about: Iraqi and coalition forces have captured more weapon caches since the beginning of the year than they did all of last year. Why? Because people are beginning to trust that the security situation will improve; they're willing to step forward. Most people want to live in peace. Iraqi mothers want their children to grow up in a peaceful world, just like our mothers do. There's something universal about motherhood, isn't there? They want something better for their children, and they don't like the violence, and they're expecting their Government to help them. And that's what we're doing: We're helping to provide security.

We're also seeing gains from our new strategy in Anbar Province. Anbar is a large Sunni area west of Baghdad that has been a hotbed for insurgents and Al Qaida. This is where Al Qaida said they were going to establish a new safe haven. They have made it clear they want safe havens. Why? Because they want to attack again, they want to spread their ideology. This is what the enemy has said. And I take the words of the enemy very seriously, and so should the American people.

With the help of tribal sheikhs, American and Iraqi forces have cleared and held terrorist strongholds in Ramadi and Fallujah. The population is tired of Al Qaida. They're tired of murder. And we're striking powerful blows against Al Qaida in Anbar, and that helps our security here at home.

The summer is going to be a critical period for our new strategy. I've cautioned that the enemies of free Iraq will—particularly Al Qaida and illegal militias—are going to continue their campaigns of terror and intimidation to stop the progress of a free society. We can expect heavy fighting in the coming weeks. We can expect more casualties, both American and Iraqi casualties.

Just yesterday two minarets of the Golden Mosque of Samarra were blown up in an attack that had all the hallmarks of Al Qaida. The mosque is one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam. The same mosque that was blown up last year—the Golden Dome was blown up, and that caused the sectarian violence to get out of hand, which caused me to make a decision to send more troops in, as opposed to withdrawing them.

You see, these killers hope that their attacks, like this one, will create enough confusion and chaos that we will abandon this young democracy. They have objectives; they have goals; they want to drive us out. They thrive on chaos. Why? Because it enables them to develop safe haven. If they ever gain safe haven, the United States becomes even more vulnerable to attack. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, what happens overseas matters to the security of the United States of America. It is better to defeat them overseas than face them here on our soil again.

The act of cruelty that took place yesterday and has taken place by these car bombs that destroy innocent life reveals the terrorists for what they are: the enemy of every Iraqi who seeks to live in peace. That's what they are; they're the enemy of people who want to live in peace.

I call on Iraqis to reject this provocation. America will continue to stand behind the Iraqi people as they fight these extremists and terrorists, people who want to destroy both our countries. With our help, we expect the Iraqi Government to pass laws that help the people of that troubled land rec-

oncile their differences so that the people who voted for democracy can raise their families in a secure environment. We all have obligations to make sure that this young democracy survives. That's what the Iraqi people expect our Government to do, and that's what the American people expect us to tell the Iraqi Government to do.

Obviously, this is more than a military mission; there must be a political track at the same time. This is a difficult fight, and the temptation is to look for an easy way out. Some in Washington who—want to declare defeat before our troops even had the chance to make it work. The consequences of failure would be grave.

If we withdraw before the Iraqi Government can defend itself, we would leave a dangerous security vacuum, which extremist forces like Al Qaida would compete to fill. Sectarian violence would multiply on a horrific scale. Fighting could engulf the entire region in chaos. The extremists who emerge victorious in this struggle could use Iraq as a base to launch new attacks against America. Ultimately, our troops might have to return to Iraq in order to protect ourselves, and confront an entrenched enemy that is even more dangerous. The stakes are high.

We will not abdicate our responsibility and leave this problem to future generations. Now is the time to confront the danger. Now is the time to do the hard work necessary for this democracy to survive. Now is the time to stand with the Iraqi people, not only for their security but for our own. And that is why we will complete the mission.

For all the talk about consequences of failure, we also need to remember the consequences of success in Iraq. Success will give us a new ally in the war on terror. This is a global war that we're fighting against ideologues who use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. It's important for us to support forms of government that defeat an ideology of hate. And the best form of government that defeats

ideology of hate is one of hope, and that's liberty. And it's worked throughout the history of the United States of America and the world, for that matter. We have seen freedom's power to transform societies before.

My dad, like many of your relatives, defended our Nation in a bloody war against the Japanese and the Germans. I doubt right after World War II somebody would have predicted that one of George W. Bush's—well, they wouldn't have predicted I'd have been President anyway, but—[laughter]—particularly my friends in Midland, Texas. [Laughter] But I doubt somebody would have said a future President would be sitting down at a table with the Japanese, keeping the peace. After a bloody war, with the sworn enemy being the Japanese and the Germans, I doubt anybody would have said—had the confidence necessary to say that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies into allies. But that's what happened.

I went to the G-8, and Angela Merkel, who is a really fine leader for Germany, was at the table. And Shinzo Abe from Japan was at the table. We're talking about peace. We're talking about dealing with the conditions that cause radicalism to prevail, dealing with forms of government that frustrate people so much that 19 kids get on

an airplane and kill nearly 3,000 Americans. But we've got to be confident as we look at the future. Liberty has transformed enemies to allies. Liberty has got the capacity to defeat an ideology based upon hate. Liberty has got the ability to bring light into societies.

We've done this kind of hard work before. And it's in our interests to secure a young generation of Americans against the threats of the 21st century, to do this work again. I'm optimistic about our future. I believe the United States can achieve anything she sets her mind to. And so I come to you today to talk about making this economy stronger, to dealing with problems, and to how the United States intends to handle the biggest issue facing us, and that's to make sure we protect the American people. The challenges are great, but this country can handle any challenge that comes our way.

Proud to be with you. May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. at the Capital Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to David R. Meyer, chairman, Associated Builders and Contractors National Executive Committee; President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba; and Ens. Marc A. Mares, USCG.

Statement on the Death of Ruth Bell Graham

June 14, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Ruth Bell Graham, a remarkable woman of faith whose life was defined by her belief in a personal, loving, and gracious God. She was an encouraging friend, accomplished poet, and devoted mother of 5 and grandmother of 19.

Ruth's marriage to her husband Billy was a true and loving partnership. As the wife of the world's most beloved evangelist, she inspired people around the world with her humor, intelligence, elegance, and kindness. Laura and I offer our prayers and condolences to Billy and the Graham family.